

Cafarelli named Katha Quinn winner

By **Malcolm Moran**

They were having dinner the night before a game, Mike Brey and Bernie Cafarelli, the coach and his former SID, to catch up and talk about their time together at Notre Dame, when the coach had a request.

“So, Bernie,” Brey said, “tell me about the award you’re winning.”

The word was already beginning to spread. Cafarelli, the associate commissioner for communications and external relations at the American Athletic Conference, had been named the winner of the Katha Quinn Award, named for the late sports information director at St. John’s to recognize outstanding service to the media.

Cafarelli is the third woman to win the award since 1991, joining Chris Fallon of the National Invitation Tournament and Amy Early of USA Basketball. She had learned of the honor when she joined a conference call of USBWA officers and district representatives. Cafarelli, the SID representative, was instructed to join the call in progress. She soon discovered that the delay was necessary because the board had been talking about her. She joined the call and learned the news.



Bernie Cafarelli

“Stunned disbelief,” she said. “I don’t feel I was worthy of the award. I’m not someone who wants to be in the limelight.”

She spent 22 years at Notre Dame until the move to the American Conference in January 2016. When Brey was hired in the summer of 2000 Cafarelli met with the new coach. He had gone from his first head coaching job at Delaware to the high-profile world of Notre Dame and the complex – and more than slightly crazy – relationships of the old Big East.

They sat and talked. One hour became two, and two became three. The relationship came into focus when she asked a frank question.

“Do you have a problem working with a woman?” Cafarelli remembered asking.

“My thing was, ‘Bernie, you’re a pro. Let’s do this thing,’” Brey remembered.

He soon discovered that her institutional memory would help him navigate through this new world. Cafarelli was a Notre Dame graduate who for eight years worked at Providence College, at the hub of the Big East universe in the formative years of the league. “She was

a Big East girl, through and through,” Brey said. “She knew the cities. She knew the people in the cities. She knew the media in the cities She understood how to deal with the other Catholic schools.”

Thanks to her guidance, a coach’s potentially intimidating process had just become much simpler.

“She was like a big sister to me,” Brey said. “We had the kind of relationship where she would come down and she could say, ‘I know you don’t want to do this, but you should do this.’ I’d mess with her: ‘You’re like my big sister coming to see me.’”

She was often the only female in the Notre Dame basketball traveling party.

“Mike made me feel like part of his staff,” she said. “I couldn’t have asked for a better situation. They understood my role.”

As Brey’s program grew, Cafarelli’s role became strikingly similar to what Katha Quinn had achieved at St. John’s throughout the 1980s, when the sweaters worn by coach Lou Carnesecca became a national story and Chris Mullin and Walter Berry each became the USBWA national player of the year.

Quinn was honored at the USBWA meeting at the 1988 Final Four for her work at the 1987 Pan American Games while she underwent treatment for liver cancer. She passed away in March, 1989 at the age of 35.

Koenig’s social activism is Most Courageous

By **Mike Waters**

The American poet E.E. Cummings once wrote, “It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are.”

Those words describe the journey of Bronson Koenig, a senior guard at Wisconsin and this year’s winner of the USBWA’s Most Courageous Award.

Last summer, Koenig closely examined who he really was. He’s a Native American member of the Ho-Chunk tribe.

While working out with a friend in Los Angeles, Koenig kept hearing reports and watching videos about the Native Americans who were protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock, N.D.

The issue struck a nerve.

“It’s two things. One is human rights and the other is the drinking water,” Koenig said. “It’s all Lakota land. They’re putting the pipeline through Lakota land. I think the U.S. has made 566 treaties with the Native Americans and not honored one of them. With this issue, they’re not honoring two or three of the treaties.

“And the concerns about the impact on the drinking water. The water brings people life. It brings Mother Earth life. Native Americans have a spiritual connection to Mother Earth. We don’t own a certain piece of land. We’re here to be caretakers of the land and Mother Earth.”

Koenig saw the images coming out of Standing



Bronson Koenig

Rock and wondered why there wasn’t more outrage.

“I wanted to raise awareness,” Koenig said. “I thought it would be a great experience to go out there and be with all those people.

“But I also thought I had no chance to get there because of my schedule.”

Then Koenig’s brother, Miles, said he planned on going. A weekend opened up for Bronson in September. Koenig’s training partner, Clint Parks, was on board, too.

“We all drove to Standing Rock together,” Koenig said.

Koenig was not prepared for what he saw at Standing Rock. The camps were far removed from the protests, but the number of people went into the thousands. Entire families were living in large encampments.

With Parks’ help, Koenig planned to put on a basketball clinic for the Native American children at Standing Rock. But even before the clinic, Koenig got an inkling of just how important his appearance would be.

The three arrived right at dusk. The protest sites were 30 minutes away. They drove through the reservation and spotted some kids shooting at a rickety hoop on an outdoor court.

Parks wanted to ask the kids if they were going to the basketball clinic the next day.

“Yeah,” said one boy. “If we can get a ride.”

Then Parks pointed to Koenig and asked the boys if they knew who he was.

“Bronson, he plays for Wisconsin,” the boy said.

“I could barely make their faces out and they knew who I was,” Koenig said recalling his first interaction with the people at Standing Rock.

The response to Bronson’s clinic was so great that the reservation’s indoor gym wasn’t big enough. So he added an outdoor clinic with a makeshift hoop on a court of patted down grass.

A classmate who was interning with the Players Tribune put him in touch with a writer there. That story sparked more stories of the star player of Native American descent getting involved in a controversial social issue.

“I didn’t really know exactly what I was getting myself into,” Koenig said. “I didn’t realize my going there would create such a buzz. I didn’t know it was that big a deal.”

Koenig has experienced some negative reaction.

“Honestly, people are cowards,” he said. “I didn’t get a lot of direct negative feedback, but I’d read or one of my friends would show me the negative comments on the articles written about me. There were a lot. Just ignorant comments. ‘Stupid liberal.’ ‘Go drink your fire-water.’ ‘How are you getting to the protest? Hope you’re riding a horse.’ Stupid stuff like that.”

But any negativity has been over-shadowed by the positive response.

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Full Court Press will educate sports journalism students

Through the years, the USBWA has been active in educating students about the sports journalism profession. One of the ways the USBWA has done this is to conduct a sportswriting seminar and scholarship competition called “Full Court Press” at the NCAA men’s Final Four each year.

This year marks the 17th anniversary of the event. It will be held in Glendale, Ariz., at the University of Phoenix Stadium on Friday, March 31.

The seminar provides opportunities for students interested in a career in sports journalism to meet leaders in the industry and compete for a \$1,000 scholarship.

The scholarship is in honor of the late Larry Donald, the only two-time president in USBWA history and long-time publisher and editor of *Basketball Times*.

The seminar is organized by the Sports Capital Journalism Program at IUPUI in Indianapolis and moderated by its director, Malcolm Moran, a past USBWA president and member of the association’s Hall of Fame.

At the center of the seminar is a panel discussion featuring some past and present USBWA officers and Hall of Fame members.

The panel is expected to discuss topics such as the influence of social media, the state of the job market, navigational skills in a 24/7 digital era and survival tactics to deal with increasingly difficult deadlines. A question-and-answer session will follow the panel discussion.

Students electing to participate in the writing contest will receive assignments to cover events surrounding the men’s championship, including press conferences and practices.

Students interested in attending the seminar in Phoenix should contact Moran at malcolmmoran1@gmail.com.

WRITING CONTEST DEADLINE JUNE 16. The USBWA’S annual best writing contest continues to be one of the association’s most popular services for members.

Between 150 and 160 entries are typically submitted each year, and the contest has attracted veterans as well as young reporters just entering the profession. There has also been a noticeable increase in the number of women writers submitting stories.

The deadline to submit stories and columns that appeared in print or online during the 2016-17 basketball season is June 16. Entries received after the deadline will not be accepted.

Entries can be submitted in five categories: column writing, moderate-length features, magazine-length features, spot news/game coverage and enterprise/investigative stories.

Plaques and cash prizes are awarded in each category, with \$150 given for first place, \$125 for second, \$100 for third, \$75 for fourth and \$50 for fifth.

Only dues-paying members of the USBWA are eligible to enter the writing contest.

Members may enter more than one category, but can submit only one entry per category. A series of

articles may be submitted in the enterprise/investigative category.

Entries must include at the top of each story the name of the category, the author or authors of the story, the publication or website in which the article appeared, the date it was published or appeared online and an email address and telephone number for the entry’s writer or writers.

Entries must be submitted to contest@usbwa.com in a readable type size. Any entry submitted in type size so small it cannot be read won’t be considered. Send Word or text files only. Do not send links to stories on the Internet and clippings from magazines or newspapers. Also, delete any advertising, photos and captions from the files and any unnecessary carriage returns.

USBWA SCHOLARSHIP. Applications are now being accepted for the USBWA’s college scholarship for the son or daughter of USBWA members. The scholarship is \$1,000 annually for four years and is open to students currently in college or planning to attend a junior college or four-year institution in the fall.

To qualify, students must take a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester in college, maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0, demonstrate academic excellence and show achievement in citizenship and leadership in a community service. The deadline to apply is June 1.

Applications are available on the USBWA website at www.usbwa.com.

USBWA SPONSORS. The USBWA wishes to thank the corporate sponsors who have supported the organization through the years.

ESPN has been with the USBWA the longest of any sponsor, since the mid-1980s serving primarily as the main sponsor of the USBWA awards ceremonies at both the men’s and women’s Final Four. ESPN also sponsors the back cover of the annual membership directory.

Other sponsors include the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, the National Association of Basketball Coaches, USA Basketball and the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA). Each has a full page ad in the membership directory.

FINAL FOUR LUNCHEON. This year’s USBWA awards luncheon at the Final Four in Phoenix will be held on Monday, April 3, at the Squaw Peak Hilton Hotel in downtown Phoenix, starting at 11:30 a.m. The USBWA will honor at the luncheon Bernie Cafarelli of the American Conference with the Katha Quinn Award; Wisconsin basketball player Bronson Koenig with the Most Courageous Award; David Gardner (SI.com) with the Rising Star Award; and Hall of Fame inductees Steve Carp (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*), David Teel (*Newport News Daily Press*), Tom Archdeacon (*Dayton Daily News*), and Frank Deford (*Sports Illustrated*).

Joe Mitch

USBWA

Executive Director



Passing the gavel for more shining moments

I'm not sure it was at the split second a ball fell through net for what is arguably the biggest shot in the history of an NCAA Tournament championship game, the one that allowed Villanova's basketball team to do the impossible and top the wonderment of 1985 and the fairy tale that was born from it, when I realized my fate.

Maybe it hit me the following day: This is what poor ol' Gene Bartow must have felt like.

It was enough to follow in the highlights of those terrific past presidents of the United States Basketball Writers Association, but for my year-long tenure to begin with Kris Jenkins going all historic on North Carolina, well, that's one pretty massive enchilada to consume.

How to top it?

I won't make any promises in terms of the upcoming Final Four in Arizona producing such a magical ending, that this year's national championship will also turn One Shining Moment into One Legendary Shot.

Of course, by the time Monday's final begins, my friend Vahe Gregorian will have assumed his role as your new president, so any stinker of a game should be summarily attached to his resume.

And should his reign begin with another incredible finish, I'll just accuse him of spreading fake news.

But while which four teams will advance to college basketball's final weekend and how the narrative will play out once there remains unknown, this doesn't: It has been my absolute privilege and honor to serve as president of an organization that means so much to so many, that has over the years represented thousands who love the game while dutifully promoting and valuing their work.



The last year also reiterated one point that anyone who has ever had contact with the USBWA understands: You know that line about leadership being for the benefit of the followers and not the enrichment of the leader?

That's every bit of Joe Mitch.

Think for a second all you believe our executive director does for the membership and immediately times that by 1,000. Joe is the engine, the captain, the person for whom without his tireless effort and commitment to keeping our ship afloat, there wouldn't be a USBWA. I knew how much work he put in before being handed the gavel. It's more. A lot more. More than myself or anyone realizes.

It's also important to continue searching for ways to help each other do our jobs and improve those working conditions critical to that end, and for this we all owe John Akers a deep sense of thanks and gratitude for implementing several ad-hoc committees this year aimed at that goal.

Whether it be for things like seating or diversity or social media or dealing with the selection committee, John began a process by recruiting some of our most talented members to lead the way on making things better for all of us. The work of these committees as the sum-

mer arrives and we head toward another season should prove invaluable.

This is why we work as an organization, because of the continued commitment of people like Joe and John and the annual arrival of new faces willing to step forward and make a difference.

This is also why we work: We are all inclusive, a place where the spectrum of those deservedly honored stretches far and wide. I will always feel a great sense of pride that the Hall of Fame class enshrined in my year as president defines

this sense of embracement, that we will honor in the same manner a national figure such as *Sports Illustrated* senior writer/novelist Frank Deford alongside community stalwarts Steve Carp of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, David Teel of the *Daily Press* in Newport News, Va., and Tom Archdeacon of the *Dayton Daily News* in Ohio.

Enjoy the impending March Madness. It's nearly that time of year. Our time. The best time. It's beyond encouraging to know the rising talents we have within the USBWA. Our home is in good hands, and the person who will lead us next year is as good as our business knows.

Vahe will do a wonderful job. I have sat with him in an empty parking lot in the middle of the night in Beijing as he filed an Olympics story to the *Kansas City Star* under the dimness of a street lamp.

He will be just as proficient and impressive as your president as he was turning out copy in such a unique and challenging setting.

And he will, undoubtedly, be as appreciative of the time and opportunity as I have been.

Best now.

Best always.

Gardner joining Bleacher Report with Rising Star award

A restless nature has served David Gardner well over his young career.

The 27-year-old Gardner, named the USBWA's Rising Star by past winners of the award, recently joined Bleacher Report as a staff writer and will write columns and long-form stories there about college basketball. Three years before that, Gardner became the college basketball editor for *Sports Illustrated's* website.

"I think I am kind of a wanderer by nature, and there are a lot of things (in college basketball) to grasp my attention," said Gardner, who will begin his new job at Bleacher Report on Feb. 27. "There are so many people, so many stories, and all of them are interesting to me.

At SI.com, Gardner exhibited a versatility beyond his years.

"I've always been impressed at how effortlessly he can wear a lot of hats at SI," Luke Winn said while Gardner was still his colleague. "I know these awards tend to be exclusively about writing, but David is our Swiss Army knife: He edits and produces our college hoops section at SI.com, does video commentary in our studio, hosts Facebook Live chats with Wooden Award candidates, records podcasts during the NCAA Tournament – and on top of that, he's a really good writer."

Early on, Gardner was shaped by that wandering spirit. He went to Jamaica with a church group while in junior high, backpacked across Europe in high school



David Gardner

and went on a Christian mission that took him to 11 countries in 11 months after graduating from college with degrees in journalism and psychology.

Rather than join school publications at Hillsborough High in Tampa, Fla., Gardner became the assistant editor of an NFL website as a high school senior. Instead of working for *The Alligator* at the University of Florida, he became an editor and reporter for the NFL website Football Outsiders and *GatorCountry.com*.

Gardner also attempted early on to surround himself with talented people. While in high school, he corresponded with Michael Silver of *SI* and Michael David Smith of Pro Football Talk. During

his early years at Florida, he reached out to some of the most talented writers and editors in the Tampa-St. Petersburg area, such as Thomas French, a Pulitzer Prize winner; Pulitzer finalists Kelley Benham and Ben Montgomery; and Michael Kruse, a former USBWA member who is now a senior staff writer at Politico.

Gardner soon learned how to deal with rejection when he pitched a story to Benham about author Rick Bragg's first venture into fiction, promising quotes from French and renowned newspaper editor and journalism professor Gene Roberts.

"She wrote me back," Gardner recalled with a laugh, "and said, 'It sounds like a great story idea, but Tom is my husband, Rick is my ex-boyfriend and Gene

was my mentor in college. If we wanted the story, we could probably do it on our own.'"

Yet Gardner developed relationships that allowed him to spend quality time with several *Tampa Bay Times* reporters.

"Back when he was at Gainesville, he'd make tracks for St. Pete," Kruse recalled of Gardner. "He was very eager to help and very eager to learn."

A year after graduating from Florida, Gardner delayed his professional career by going on the World Race, a mission that took him to Guatemala, the Honduras, Nicaragua, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Malawi. He met his future wife, Ash, on that trip. About a year later, in 2013, he was offered the job by *SI* just a few days before they were married.

"That was a pretty big week for me," he said.

As in his first encounter with Kelley Benham French, one of Gardner's most memorable moments during the past year involved rejection.

Gardner managed to get a couple of quotes from Vice President and Syracuse alum Joe Biden while attending his first Final Four professionally last season, with one of the quotes appearing in Winn's cover story. Gardner attempted a third question when Biden's Secret Service agents cut off his path and the interview.

Biden turned and smiled at Gardner. "Don't worry," Biden said. "It happens to everyone."

That night, it happened only to the one editor who was inspired to wander from his seat in the hopes of making a colleague's story even better.

That's why he is the USBWA's Rising Star.

CoSIDA's Kowal named Haverbeck winner

By Mel Greenberg

With the Women's Final Four to be held this year in Dallas in the Lone Star State, awarding Barb Kowal the Mary Jo Haverbeck Award for giving service to the United States Women's Basketball Writers Association has all the right connections.

Though this award is the women's version of the Katha Quinn award on the men's side, Kowal's current role as director of professional development and external affairs for the College Sports Information Directors of America has filtered into both genders on the media side benefitting from her work with a new generation of athletic department media representatives.

Kowal was there at the creation when the powerful Connecticut women's basketball program took off in the early 1990s and was able to help facilitate an increased media demand covering Geno Auriemma and his players.

Then she uprooted from New England to the Deep South to work with a second Hall of Fame coach in Jody Conradt and the University of Texas program before moving into her duties with CoSIDA.

Kowal was a contemporary and friend of Haverbeck, the late pioneering Penn State women's sports information



Barb Kowal

director for whom this award is named.

"That's terrific," Kowal said when given the news of her honor. "I'm in awe and overwhelmed, because first Mary Jo and I were great friends, and second, because I have been there to see those who came before me with this USBWA award and to be placed with this group is humbling and quite an honor. I'm practically speechless."

Temple's Larry Dougherty, a past CoSIDA president, said: "I can think of no one more deserving of this honor than Barb Kowal. She truly embodies the passion that Mary Jo displayed."

Doug Vance, CoSIDA's executive director, echoed Dougherty. "I'm thrilled for Barb that she has been selected for such a

meaningful honor. In particular, because it's an award selected by USBWA that pays tribute to Mary Jo Haverbeck ... one of the very best in the history of CoSIDA."

Judy Willson, assistant commissioner of the Mountain West, added, "Barb is very much like Mary Jo in this aspect. Both women are great examples to those of us who are trying to follow in their footsteps and be the same type of extraordinary leaders in the field."

Auriemma remembered Kowal as the media

traffic controller during the rise of the Huskies.

"Barb was with us at a time when it was just starting and we had no experience with just what was coming from a media attention standpoint," he recalled recently. "We were so lucky to have Barb as our SID to guide us through those early years because she was the perfect person to steer us through all the growing pains."

"Over the years, we have gained a lot of experience with the media, but when Barb was here, it was really tough and she managed it perfectly."

Jeff Jacobs, columnist for the *Hartford Courant*, recalled Kowal's passion in those UConn days.

"When I came over from the NHL, she was the first women's SID I met for basketball, and the passion she had for the sport and doing her job, it was like assertiveness. It really struck me. It really opened my eyes to the game."

Joni Lehmann of the Big 12 Conference remembered Kowal bringing the same passion to the Longhorns.

"She worked tirelessly to provide top-notch service to the media," Lehmann said. "Her attention to detail and passion for promoting her coaches and student-athletes were unmatched."

Kowal, who assists the NCAA's Rick Nixon annually at the Women's Final Four, began as a graduate assistant to Howard Davis at Massachusetts before becoming Manhattanville College's first full time SID (1982-85) prior to joining UConn.

Kentucky, UCLA freshmen named to USBWA watch lists

ST. LOUIS – Kentucky's De'Aaron Fox and Malik Monk and UCLA's Lonzo Ball and TJ Leaf were among the 21 players named to the USBWA's midseason watch list for the Oscar Robertson Trophy, given to the national player of the year.

The four players were also among the 12 players named to the midseason watch list for the Wayman Tisdale Award, given to the nation's top freshman.

Balloting for the USBWA's All-America Team, All-District Teams and the association's individual awards will take place in March. The Oscar Robertson Trophy will be presented at a news conference on Friday, March 31, at the Final Four in Phoenix. The Henry Iba Coach of the Year will be presented at the association's awards breakfast the following Monday. The presentation of the Wayman Tisdale Award is to be announced.

Here are the midseason watch lists:

Oscar Robertson Trophy

Dwayne Bacon, Florida State; Lonzo Ball, UCLA; Joel Berry II, North Carolina; De'Aaron Fox, Kentucky; Markelle Fultz, Washington; Ethan Happ, Wisconsin; Josh Hart, Villanova; Marcus Keene, Central Michigan; Luke Kennard, Duke; Jock Landale, Saint Mary's; TJ Leaf, UCLA; Lauri Markkanen, Arizona; Kelan Martin, Butler; Frank Mason III, Kansas; Malik Monk, Kentucky; Jonathan Motley, Baylor; Alec Peters, Valparaiso; Caleb Swanigan, Purdue; Nigel Williams-Goss, Gonzaga.

Wayman Tisdale Award

Lonzo Ball, UCLA; De'Aaron Fox, Kentucky; Markelle Fultz, Washington; Jonathan Isaac, Florida State; Josh Jackson, Kansas; TJ Leaf, UCLA; Lauri Markkanen, Arizona; Malik Monk, Kentucky; Justin Patton, Creighton; Shamorie Ponds, St. John's; Dennis Smith Jr., North Carolina State; Jayson Tatum, Duke.

Online Credentialing Task Force will consider website endorsements

The USBWA's Online Credentialing Task Force was formed nearly two and one-half years ago and already has issued endorsements for 34 websites. These websites, in the opinion of the USBWA, deserve full consideration when applying for credentials to NCAA member institutions' home games, college basketball tournament events and the NCAA tournament.

The credentialing task force was set up to identify criteria that would be especially helpful to sports information directors when evaluating sites for the purpose of either granting or denying credential requests.

The task force was comprised initially of reporters from traditional print and online organizations, SIDs and representatives from APSE and the USBWA. The task force agreed that the APSE's statement of ethics guidelines constituted a good model for professional journalism websites to follow.

The intent of the USBWA is twofold: 1) to provide support for online entities that meet reasonable expectations of professional editorial oversight and adherence to journalistic and ethical standards; and 2) to provide a service and a resource for media coordinators, who can take into account USBWA endorsement when considering a request to grant credentials.

Receiving endorsement from the USBWA does not guarantee that a website will be credentialed, however. NCAA-member institutions and other event-sponsoring organizations retain the sole right to grant or deny credentials.

When reviewing applications from websites for endorsement, the task force thoroughly vets every site and uses the following criteria to judge a website's legitimacy:

Editorial oversight and adherence to journalistic and ethical standards; evaluation of demonstrated proprietary, rather than aggregate, content; experience of staff; scope of coverage; balance of coverage;

frequency and consistency of publication.

The task force evaluates websites only and not individuals. Traditional media organizations (newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations or networks) and independent websites should apply for endorsement on behalf of their staff members. Freelancers should apply for accreditation either through or on behalf of the media organization for which they will be covering an event.

Current members of the Online Credentialing Task Force are Randy McClure, Rush the Court and the USBWA's new media liaison; Joe Mitch, USBWA executive director; and Kirk Wessler, *Peoria Journal Star* and a past president of the USBWA. Chris DiSano, formerly of College Chalktalk, served the first two years on the committee when it began evaluating websites.

For a list of websites endorsed by the USBWA and to apply for endorsement, go to the USBWA's website at usbwa.com and click on the Credentialing Application link.

Bogaczyk named to Virginia Sports Hall of Fame

Jack Bogaczyk, who spent 28 years in the sports media business in Roanoke, Va., was named to the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame. Bogaczyk spent 27 of those years in the newspaper business, first at The World News and then The Roanoke Times after the merger of the two papers.

Bogaczyk was the beat writer covering VMI and Virginia Tech from 1979-88. His award-winning 35-part series on Hokies athletics in 1985 contributed to administrative and cultural changes in the Tech program.

Lodge Notes